
Education Committee

HB 1240

Brief Description: Expanding the list of crimes that require dismissal or certificate revocation for school employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Dammeier, Priest, Haler, Roach, McCune and Herrera.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds many additional crimes to the list of crimes which result in mandatory termination of certificated and classified school employees, mandatory permanent certificate revocation, and the barring of contractor's employees from school grounds.
- Requires mandatory revocation when the certificate was obtained through fraudulent means.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to review, on a quarterly basis, information provided by the Washington State Patrol regarding convictions and guilty pleas.
- Directs that school employees and contractors must notify the school district immediately after arrest for certain specified crimes.
- Requires school districts to notify the OSPI of certain arrests and terminations.
- Allows superintendents and administrators to file complaints with the OSPI regarding certificated individuals, regardless of whether the individual is employed by the complainant.

Hearing Date: 2/10/09

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195)

Background:

Mandatory Termination for Certain Crimes.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A school district must immediately terminate the employment of any certificated or classified employee upon conviction or a guilty plea to certain specified crimes against children, such as physical injury or death of a child and promoting prostitution of a child. The employee has a right of appeal.

Discharge for Probable Cause.

School districts may discharge certificated school employees for probable cause. Examples of conduct for which an employee could be discharged for probable cause include immorality, sexual misconduct with children, supplying alcohol to minors, abusive behavior toward children, and insubordination. Employees discharged for probable cause have a right of appeal.

Revocation of Certificate.

A certificate must be permanently revoked by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) upon a guilty plea or the conviction of any of the same crimes against children for which a certificated employee must be terminated. This permanent mandatory revocation provision applies to pleas or convictions after July 23, 1989. A person whose certificate has been permanently revoked has a right of appeal.

In addition, upon a finding that an employee has engaged in an unauthorized use of school equipment to intentionally access material depicting sexually explicit conduct or has intentionally possessed on school grounds any material depicting sexually explicit conduct, the certificate must be suspended or revoked. A first time violation results in either suspension or revocation, as determined by the OSPI. A second violation results in mandatory revocation.

Certificates may also be revoked for immorality, violation of written contract, unprofessional conduct, intemperance, or crimes against the law of the state. A due process hearing is available.

Contractor's Employees Barred From School.

Additionally, any contract for services entered into by a school district must provide that any of the contractor's employees convicted or pleading guilty to these same specified crimes against children must be prohibited from working at a public school.

Notification.

Upon a person's conviction or plea of guilty for any of the specified crimes which result in mandatory termination and revocation, a prosecuting attorney must notify the Washington State Patrol (WSP). The WSP, in turn, is required to notify the OSPI. The OSPI is required to review the information provided by the WSP to determine whether the person holds a certificate issued by the OSPI. If so, the OSPI must provide this information to the Professional Educator Standards Board and the employing school district.

Summary of Bill:

The list of crimes, for which convictions or pleas of guilty result in mandatory termination, is expanded to include crimes such as any felony with sexual motivation, felony indecent exposure, incest, kidnapping, and robbery. The victim of the crime need not be a child or minor. Attempts, conspiracies, or solicitations to commit any of the crimes on the list are also cause for mandatory termination. The new provisions apply to convictions or pleas of guilty which occur on or after the effective date.

Certificates must be revoked upon a guilty plea or conviction for any of the crimes on the expanded list. Contractor's employees who have been convicted of any of these crimes are prohibited from the school.

Mandatory revocation must also occur upon a finding that the certificate holder obtained the certificate through fraudulent means, including misrepresentation of required academic credentials or prior criminal record.

Classified employees and certificated staff are required to notify the school district immediately following an arrest for any felony which would result in mandatory termination if the employee pleaded guilty or was convicted. Contractor employees must notify the contractor and the contractor must notify the school district regarding any such arrests. School districts are required to notify the OSPI regarding all such arrests as well as terminations for cause.

The list of crimes which must be reported by the prosecutor to the WSP, and by the WSP to the OSPI, are similarly expanded to include the new crimes as well as the crimes against children already specified in law. The OSPI must review the information provided by the WSP on at least a quarterly basis.

School districts are prohibited from reaching agreements which are in conflict with the termination and notice provisions in the bill.

School superintendents and administrators are permitted to file complaints with the OSPI regarding certificated individuals, regardless of whether the certificated individual is employed by the complainant.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.